

We Unfold

Sydney Dance Company,

Sydney Theatre

Until Saturday

Tickets \$20-\$70

Bookings (02) 9250 1999

Critic's rating 6/10

THE opening to Sydney Dance Company's new production is like the beginning of *2001: A Space Odyssey* with everything from a solar eclipse, star flights and beings entering a confusing new world.

Even the music by Italian composer Ezio Bosso has that classical grandeur designed to shock the senses with great waves of orchestration that even cause speakers in the new Sydney Theatre venue to reverberate. (Stanley Kubrick would have been proud.)

So it's with a bang that Sydney Dance Company starts its journey under the newly appointed artistic director, Rafael Bonachela. It's a fresh beginning for the company and gives audiences some idea of the type of dance and movement we can expect.

Divided into four sections, with a mix of large ensemble pieces flowing into gentler solos and duos, *We Unfold* takes us through chapters themed with the elements of earth, wind, fire and water. They are almost four separate dance pieces, each accompanied by an enormous backdrop of mesmerising video footage.

Bonachela's choreography is swift as he fills the stage with dancers dressed in flesh-toned body stockings criss-crossing the space vertically, horizontally or diagonally.

The ensemble flows between rapid and



Fresh start ... Sydney Dance Company in *We Unfold*. Photo: Marco Del Grande

sharp movements, then just as quickly disappears, leaving principal dancers Amy Hollingsworth, Juliette Barton, Richard Cilli, Adam Blanch and Paul Zivkovich, who take turns to fill the space with intricate and highly energetic performances under the excellent shifting light designed by Hugh Taranto.

It's the overzealous music (which verges on the histrionic) that doesn't sit well with the performance for its 60-minute length – most particularly the deep bass and erratic violin towards the end.

In much the same way, the absolutely beautiful, slow-moving video projections of a dancer floating through space with water and fire conflict with the physical presence of the dancers on stage. It's certainly cinematic but doesn't do justice to this ensemble of veteran and newly recruited dancers.

But Bonachela has certainly made a mark with his debut piece as director of the company and gives some hints at what should be a great three-year collaboration with this deserving group of performers.

NP +
2/17/09

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